

Chapter 4. Sign Restrictions and Controls

PURPOSE

The California Streets and Highways Code authorizes the Department of Transportation to accept funds, materials, equipment, or services from persons for roadside maintenance or enhancement.* Caltrans recognizes donations made through the Adopt-A-Highway Program by identifying contributors via Adopt-Highway courtesy signs. Courtesy signs will be provided, installed, and maintained by Caltrans for each project at no cost to the adopter.

The Adopt-A-Highway Program and its courtesy signs are not a forum for advertisement or public discourse.

Courtesy signs also alert motorists and the California Highway Patrol that workers may be present. And, courtesy signs are the primary means of informing the public about the existence of the Adopt-A-Highway Program.

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DESCRIPTION OF SIGNS

Adopt-A-Highway courtesy signs consist of four components: an Adopt-A-Highway logo, a base sign, an icon depicting the adoption-type, and a recognition panel. Sign components are manufactured with predrilled bolt holes. “For Information Call 1-866-ADOPTAHWY” is preprinted on base signs. When a site is adopted, recognition panels are attached as “overlays” covering the preprinted text.

Normally, courtesy signs ship with the Adopt-A-Highway logo riveted to the base sign. Replacement logos and base signs may be ordered individually.

Adopt-A-Highway courtesy signs are available in two sizes. Illustrations of Adopt-A-Highway courtesy signs and sign components are shown on pages 4-2 and 4-3.

* The Adopt-A-Highway Program cannot accept funds or equipment at this time.



**Large courtesy sign
to be used on access-controlled
highways (freeways).**



← Courtesy sign and
preattached logo
S32/S32-A Assembly
54" x 42"

*Allow a minimum of
5' in rural areas and
7' in urban areas between
bottom of base sign
and ground*



← 1" Spacing between signs

← Adoption-type image

**Small courtesy sign
to be used on
all other
highway types.**



← Courtesy sign and preattached logo
S32/S32-A Assembly
36" x 30"

*Allow a minimum of
5' in rural areas and
7' in urban areas between
bottom of base sign
and ground*



← 1" Spacing between signs

← Adoption-type image



Adopt-A-Highway Sign Assembly



S32/S32-A Assembly
54" x 42"



S32/S32-A Assembly
36" x 30"

Adopt-A-Highway Base Sign (For Replacement Purposes Only)



S32 54" x 42"



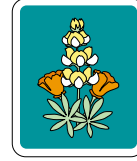
S32 36" x 30"

Adoption-Type Icons

(Same Size Used For Both Base-Sign Sizes)



LITTER
REMOVAL
S32-1
15" x 18"



WILDFLOWER
PLANTING
S32-2
15" x 18"



TREE AND
SHRUB PLANTING
S32-3
15" x 18"

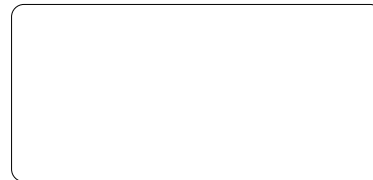


GRAFFITI
CONTROL
S32-4
15" x 18"



VEGETATION
CONTROL
S32-5
15" x 18"

Recognition Panels



S32B 45" x 21"



S32B 30" x 15"

Adopt-A-Highway Logo

(For Replacement Purposes Only)



S32-A 15" x 18"



S32-A 10" x 12"

NOTE: Mission Bell adoptions continue to use the old-style, S16-8 sign. Refer to Chapter 16 for more information.



STANDARD AND CUSTOM RECOGNITION PANELS

Detailed rules for recognition panel elements begin on page 4-7.

Standard Recognition Panels

Caltrans will provide standard recognition panels (reflective white background with non-reflective black lettering) at no cost to the adopter. Caltrans-produced panels will use the sans-serif lettering style that is designated in the Standard Highway Signs book. Organizational or corporate logos can be added to a standard panel, but the logo must be provided by the adopter at their own cost. Supplied logos must fit within the panel area and have pressure-sensitive, adhesive backing.

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Custom Recognition Panels

Adopters must provide nonstandard recognition panels at their own cost. Custom panel elements can be supplied as pressure-sensitive adhesive art to be installed by Caltrans, or, a completed panel can be supplied. Caltrans will supply blank recognition panels at no cost to participants who choose the latter option.

Recognition Panel Approval

All panel elements must be reviewed and approved by the District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator. In all circumstances, the content of recognition panel elements is solely determined by Caltrans. Coordinators should provide alternative suggestions when rejecting a sponsor's submitted text or design.

Adopters choosing to provide a custom panel must submit an accurate, scaled, and colored proof of their panel design to the District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator prior to its manufacture. Coordinators must review the finished custom panel (or pressure-sensitive adhesive artwork) before it is installed to make sure no changes have been made to the approved design.

Panels replaced during a permit period must also be approved.



ORDERING SIGN COMPONENTS

Courtesy sign components and blank recognition panels are ordered by part number from the Caltrans warehouse. Emergency orders can be purchased directly from the Caltrans-contracted sign manufacturer.

DETERMINING SIZE AND LOCATION OF SIGNS

Old-style, Adopt-A-Highway courtesy signs must be replaced with new-style signs upon issuance of new encroachment permits.

Courtesy signs are to be placed near the beginning of each adoption site on the right shoulder as an advisory that workers may be present on the roadside. The exact location of courtesy signs will be determined by each District's Office of Traffic Safety.

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The larger signs are to be used on freeways. The smaller signs are to be used on conventional highways (two-lane), in coastal zones, on scenic highways, in state parks, or in communities which request smaller signs. If an adoption site encompasses more than one type of highway, the road type where the sign is placed will determine the sign's size.

If signs are to be placed within a state park or recreation area, Districts should coordinate the sign size and location with the regional office of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Multiple Signs for the Same Group

Courtesy signs for multiple, contiguous segments held by one permittee should be no closer than four miles in the same direction.

For example, a group with a section from two to four miles in length would qualify for one sign per direction. A group with a section from four to eight miles in length would qualify for two signs per direction. However, groups cleaning only vista points and turnouts in sections over four miles in length will still receive just one sign per direction.

In cases where one group has multiple adoption types in the same segment, two adoption-type icons shall be displayed on a single sign.



When old-style signs are replaced with new-style signs, any existing signs for multiple, contiguous segments recognizing the same adopter will not be replaced.

SIGNS AT AVAILABLE ADOPTION SITES

Courtesy signs for litter removal adoptions should remain in place once installed. When a site becomes available, only the recognition panel should be removed. If the base sign is not preprinted with “For Information Call 1-866-ADOPTAHWY,” then an overlay panel with those words must be installed on the courtesy sign until the area becomes adopted.

Participants may be given the custom or State-produced panels in recognition of their efforts.

The entire courtesy sign assembly must be removed from vacant sites of all other adoption types. Variations to this sign-removal policy must be submitted, in writing, to the Statewide Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator for approval and inclusion in Chapter 23, *District Policy*.

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COURTESY SIGN AND RECOGNITION PANEL INSTALLATION

Adopt-A-Highway courtesy signs shall only be installed by the Department’s personnel under the Adopt-A-Highway Program. District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators are responsible for submitting sign installation and repair orders to the District Sign Supervisor. The maximum time from the issuance of an Adopt-A-Highway encroachment permit to installation of a courtesy sign and recognition panel should not exceed four months.

Recognition panels are usually installed by the Department’s personnel. However, Districts may allow the Permittee’s contractor to replace (install or remove) the recognition-panel portion of the sign if all of the following conditions have been met:

- Pertinent District personnel (Maintenance, Permits, Traffic Safety, etc.) agree to this practice.
- The activity occurs within a valid Encroachment Permit period.



- Recognition panel replacement is specifically authorized on the contractor's Encroachment Permit.
- The design and content of the panel(s) have been approved by the District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator.

REPLACING DAMAGED OR MISSING SIGN COMPONENTS

It is important that damaged or missing sign components be replaced or repaired as soon as possible. This includes removing graffiti and replacing signs lost during construction.

Custom Panel Replacement

Caltrans will replace custom panels with standard panels at no cost to the adopter, or, the adopter can purchase new custom panels. New custom panels, provided by the adopter, will be installed at no cost.

Repeated Vandalism

If an adopter's sign is vandalized more than three times during a single permit period or five times during the group's sponsorship, District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators may ask the group to replace the damaged or missing sign components at their own cost.

SIGNS ON SITES UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Participants are not permitted to work in their areas during construction. The entire Adopt-A-Highway sign should be removed by Caltrans and then reinstalled upon completion of the project.

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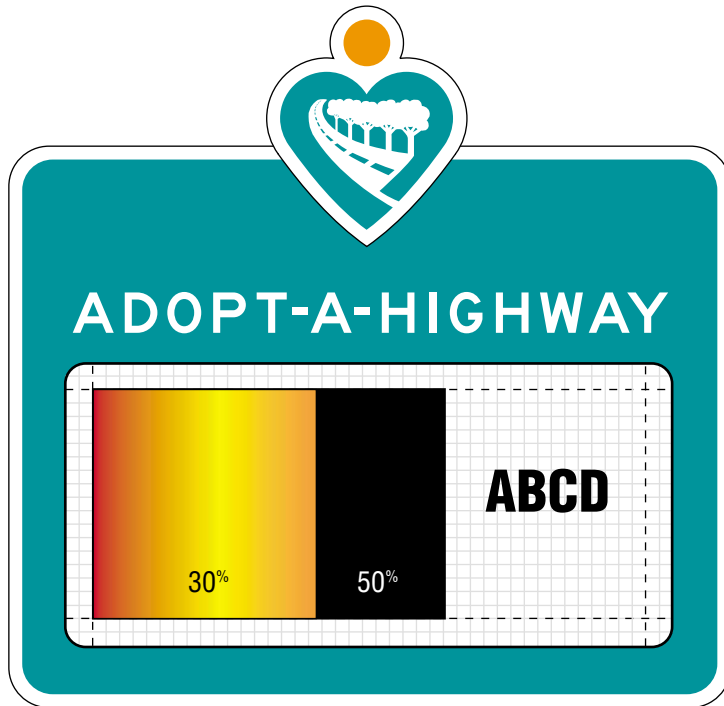
BASIC RECOGNITION PANEL RULES

Purpose

Although there is advertising value inherent in the recognition panels, they are not intended to be an advertising medium. Their purpose is to identify and recognize who is providing the adoption service, not what they do, what products they sell, or where they are located.



RECOGNITION PANEL IMAGE GUIDE



Large Panel

45" x 21" (945 sq. in.)

2" margin is required

Image area is 41" x 17"

A maximum of 50% solid color (472.5 sq. in.) is permitted of which no more than 30% (315 sq. in.) can be red, yellow, orange, or any combination thereof.

Minimum Letter Size is 3"



Small Panel

30" x 15" (450 sq. in.)

1" margin is required

Image area is 28" x 13"

A maximum of 50% solid color (225 sq. in.) is permitted of which no more than 30% (150 sq. in.) can be red, yellow, orange, or any combination thereof.

Minimum Letter Size is 2"

Lettering Size, Style, and Margins

Lettering on the small panel must be a minimum of 2 inches high. Lettering on the large panel must be a minimum of 3 inches high. Larger lettering is permissible and recommended. Margins on the small and large panels must be a minimum of 1 and 2 inches, respectively. Custom type styles are permitted provided that the lettering is legible and compliant with the color restrictions listed below.

Larger lettering is permissible and recommended.

Color Restrictions

Logos and lettering on recognition panels may include the tasteful use of colors. However, because highly colored panels may distract drivers, the following restrictions apply:

- Recognition panels shall have a white background comprising 50% of the panel.
- The use of red, orange, or yellow (or any combination thereof) for logos and lettering shall not exceed 30% of the entire panel area.
- Fluorescent, neon, reflective, or ‘dayglow’ colors are prohibited.

Legibility and Safety

Panels that are difficult to read may distract drivers. Coordinators should not approve illegible signs even if the content and color are otherwise acceptable. Reducing the proposed recognition panel design to 1/2” in height will help to determine whether or not the logo and lettering will be legible to passing motorists.

Acceptable Recognition Panel Contents

The adopter’s recognition panels must display the Organization/Business Name entered on their Adopt-A-Highway Permit Application. Limited exceptions to this rule are described in detail beginning on page 4-11. They include:

- Parent companies and subsidiaries.
- Businesses displaying only their logo.
- Shared adoptions.



Recognition panel elements are limited to the name, logo, or both of an adopter. Product names, slogans, telephone or fax numbers, street addresses, electronic mail or Internet addresses, Ham Radio i.d.'s, directions, or exit ramps are not permitted on panels. Photographs are not permitted. Adopt-A-Highway signs must not be used for political campaigning. Recognition of alcohol, tobacco, or pornographic product names are not permitted. In addition, messages, symbols, and trademarks that resemble any official traffic control device shall not be used. Limited exceptions to this rule are described in detail beginning on page 4-11. They include:

- Addition of a community or street name.
- Business names that include products.
- Intranet entities.
- Telephone businesses.

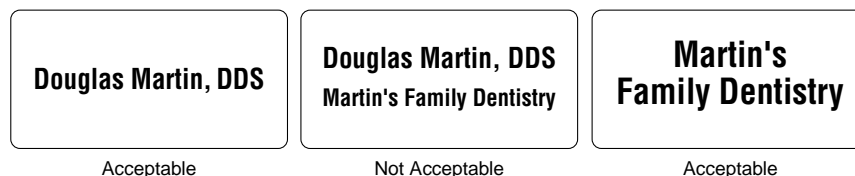
All other exceptions must be approved by the Statewide Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator.

PANEL RULES FOR ADOPTIONS BY INDIVIDUALS

Individual adopters are not permitted to use graphics or logos on their panels, however, they may use colored and/or stylized lettering.

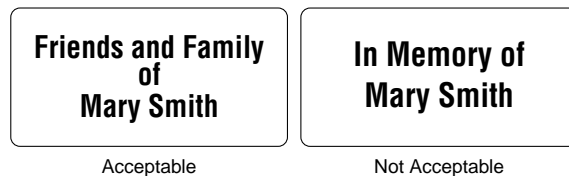
Professional Titles

Abbreviations of professional degrees, such as DDS or Ph.D., are acceptable. Panels can recognize an individual or their business, but not both.



Memorials*

Memorial panels are not permitted because the sign must recognize the person(s) making the contribution. However, “Friends of Mary Jones” or “Family of Mary Jones” would be acceptable.



Political Candidates, Elected Officials, and Appointed Officials

Panels for elected officials, appointed officials, or political candidates may not reference the office held or their individual title. In addition, any *logos* on these panels shall not reference the office held or political party.



Brokers and Agents

Because of the unique nature of their businesses, commodities brokers, real estate agents, and insurance agents may display the *logo* of the corporation they represent in addition to their name. However, the panel *wording* can recognize the individual or their business, but not both.



*Victims of DUI accidents may qualify for the Victims Memorial Sign Program offered by Caltrans Traffic Operations. For more information, refer to: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/signdel/dui/victims.htm>



Descriptive Terms

If necessary to identify an individual as different from another same-named individual, the panel may display a single, descriptive term. All such terms must be approved on a case-by-case basis.

PANEL RULES FOR CLUBS, COMMITTEES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Organizational logos are permitted on recognition panels. Logos must be the symbol or trademark commonly used by the organization. Logos must be legible to passing motorists. If the logo is not compliant with color restrictions, the logo's colors must be altered.

Addition of Community Names

If necessary to identify an organization as different from another same-named organization, the panel may indicate the community name. If an organization can be uniquely identified by a number, such as a troop, club, or post number, then the addition of the community name is not acceptable.



Staffs of or Committees for, Political Candidates, Elected Officials, and Appointed Officials

Political action committees or campaigns or staffs of elected officials, appointed officials, or political candidates may not reference the office held or individual title. Appropriate recognition may include the elected officials name and/or recognition of their staffs or volunteers. Examples include “Friends of John Smith,” “John Smith and Friends,” “Staff of John Smith,” etc. In addition, *logos* on these panels shall not reference the office held or political party.





However, a panel displaying the words “Young Republicans” would be acceptable because it does not reference an office held or the title of a political individual. In addition, groups like “Young Republicans” would be considered clubs or organizations, not political action committees.

PANEL RULES FOR BUSINESSES AND CORPORATIONS

Corporate logos are permitted on recognition panels. Logos must be the symbol or trademark commonly used by the business. Logos must be legible to passing motorists. If the logo is not compliant with the color restrictions, the logo’s colors must be altered.

Addition of Community Names or Streets

If necessary to identify a business as different from another same-named business, the recognition panel may indicate the community name. If two same-named business are located in the same community, the panel may indicate the street name (not the address) of the business providing the service. Use of both the community name and street name is not permitted.

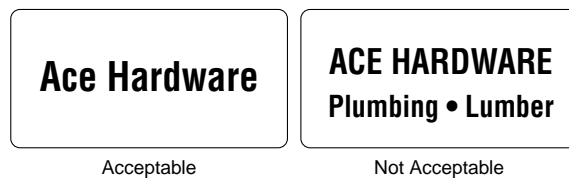


Business Names That Include Community or Street Names

Community or street names that are an established and integral part of the participant’s business or company name are acceptable. Examples include “Sacramento Signs” and “First Street Pharmacy.”

Business Names That Include Products

Product names that are an established and integral part of the participant's business or company name are usually acceptable. Business names such as "Burger King" or "Ace Hardware" would be acceptable. However, recognition of alcohol, tobacco, or pornographic product names are not permitted under any circumstance. This includes generic terms, such as "cigarettes," "beer," etc. Recognition of tourist related winery facilities is acceptable.



Parent Companies and Subsidiaries

Parent companies that own several businesses can display the name of a subsidiary on their panel. In cases like this both the name of the parent company and the subsidiary must be entered on the application. For example, Yummy Foods, Inc./Mandy's Cookie Shop or Landlubbers Property Management, Inc./Golden Acres.

Parent companies that own several businesses can display the name of a subsidiary on their panel.

Displaying Logos of Multiple Franchises

Increasing numbers business owners are combining two or more franchise operations at the same location. For example, Ned Smith has a business license under the name of Ned's Gas Stop. Ned also owns franchises for 76 gasoline and Taco Bell and he operates both franchises at Ned's Gas Stop. Ned can display both the 76 and Taco Bell logos on his panel along with the words, Ned's Gas Stop.

Display of Logo Only

Businesses (or organizations) may choose to display only their logo. This is a permissible exception to the requirement that a recognition panel must display the name entered on their Adopt-A-Highway Permit Application.

Shared Adoptions

Recognition panels for shared adoptions recognize both Permittees on the same sign regardless of whether one or two permits are issued.



Web-Based Organizations and Businesses

Entities that operate exclusively on the Internet and whose legal business or organizational name is the same as their web address' domain name, may be permitted to display their domain name on their recognition panel. For example, AutoMall.com would be acceptable panel text because:

- AutoMall.com is an Internet-based business. (There are no physical, AutoMall car lots.)
- AutoMall.com is the domain name in the web address of their home page.
- AutoMall.com has submitted a business license proving that their business name is the same as their domain name.

Coordinators must carefully examine web sites to ensure that they operate exclusively on the Internet. If the site lists the street address of a meeting or store location, then the organization would be disqualified from using their domain name as panel text.

Coordinator's must also examine all web sites for appropriate content. All previously-mentioned product name restrictions apply to domain names. In addition domain names of web sites containing sexually-explicit text or images will not be permitted as panel text.

Coordinators must carefully examine web sites to ensure that they operate exclusively on the Internet.

Telephone Businesses

Entities that operate exclusively over the telephone and whose legal business or organizational name is the same as their phone number, may be permitted to display their phone number on their recognition panel. Such entities will be examined on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the same verification rules and restrictions as web-based entities.

WHEN IN DOUBT ABOUT A PANEL'S ACCEPTABILITY

Determining whether or not panel contents and design meet requirements can be difficult. If in doubt, coordinators can:

- Refer to these guidelines.
- Ask for a copy of the company's business license to verify business name.



Sole proprietorship and partnerships must submit a copy of their business license along with their encroachment permit application as proof of their identical domain name/business name. Corporations and “S” corporations must submit copies of their articles of incorporation along with their encroachment permit application.

Fictitious business name statements cannot be used for business name verification, but they may be used to verify the relationship between a parent company and a subsidiary.

- Check the company’s web site, business card, phone book listing, or store sign to verify business name and logo.
- Cut and paste proposed panel colors into sections to verify a 50% white background and 30% combined use of red, orange, and yellow.
- Reduce an image of the panel to a height of 1/2 inch to check for legibility.
- Seek a second opinion from your traffic department, other District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators, or headquarters Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators.

Fictitious business name statements cannot be used for business name verification, but they may be used to verify the relationship between a parent company and a subsidiary.

REPLACEMENT OF NON-COMPLAINT RECOGNITION PANELS

District Adopt-A-Highway Coordinators may require immediate replacement of non-compliant recognition panels. If immediate replacement is not required, non-compliant panels shall be replaced when the Permittee applies for a new encroachment permit. Non-compliant panels that are replaced during the current permit period due to theft, damage, or vandalism will be subject to these *Guidelines*.

